

OCI HANDBOOK PROGRAM

1. Origin and Purpose. The Handbook program was authorized by the AD/CI on 6 October 1953 after discussions between the Intelligence Assistant to the DD/I and members of OCI. The Intelligence Assistant to the DD/I had outlined his need for compilations of background data which would supplement current intelligence publications. The first book, [REDACTED] was published on 30 November 1953.

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The Handbook series is a compilation of selected background data on countries of the world. The series was set up on a "no-priority" basis to draw from the OCI desk analysts in an organized and systematic form that information judged to be essential background for a proper understanding of current intelligence items. The Handbooks are a by-product of current intelligence production and provide a quick and ready briefing reference which the OCI analysts as well as others in CIA find useful in their day-to-day intelligence work.

2. Production and Maintenance. All Handbooks conform to a standard outline which contains the following categories of information: Political, Economic, Military, Geographic, Biographic, and a section entitled Current Issues. Outlines are furnished to the desk analyst, who fills in the required information relative to his country and forwards it to the Handbook staff. Published books average 30 pages.

A maintenance program is in operation which keeps the books under constant review to ensure currency. For this purpose the book is broken up into two sections, the Current Issues section and the remainder of the book. Full books are revised on an average of every six months; the Current Issues section more frequently. The revision interval is determined by the area division chiefs. About 15 to 20 books (either full books or Current Issues sections only) come up for review each month. About 150 to 200 revised text pages are produced monthly.

Since its inception, the program has required the services of three persons full time, exclusive of secretarial help. With the completion of almost all the 98 planned books, the remaining books to be issued plus the extensive program for keeping the material in the books current will require the services of two persons full time, exclusive of secretarial help. This estimate is based on the fact that there will be approximately 16,000 individual books distributed which will have to be maintained.

3. Contributors: Although the OCI analysts contribute the greater part of the Handbook material, the books depend on other sources for certain data. The Topography and Climate sections for each country are prepared by Geography Division, ORR, and the Biographic section by the Division of Biographic Information, Department of State. Special graphics for the Handbooks have been prepared by Cartographic Division, ORR, and occasionally by Graphics Branch, Presentations Division, OCI. Maps in stock are furnished by the Map Library, ORR.

4. Reproduction. Small revisions (up to ten pages) are reproduced by the OCI printing unit. Full books or substantial changes are sent to the Alexandria plant for reproduction and collation. Graphics, maps and Handbook covers are reproduced at Alexandria.

5. Status Report. Of the 98 projected Handbooks, 85 are already published. Of the 13 remaining books, eight texts are being processed presently by the Handbook staff and only five texts remain to be submitted by the analysts.

6. Distribution. Distribution of the Handbooks is based on specific requests. These requests fall into two general categories - requests for complete sets of Handbooks and requests for specific individual books. At present, requests have been received for 152 complete sets and approximately 1,440 individual books, broken down as follows:

<u>Recipient</u>	<u>No. of Sets</u>	<u>No. of Individual Books</u>
Outside CIA	40	240
Inside CIA		
Hqs		
DDI	84	335
DDP	26	135
O/TR	1	-
DCI	1	-
Overseas	-	730

The Office of Operations () is the largest single user of Handbooks. Most of its 38 sets are used by Contact Division.

I do not question the need for having essentially the Handbook always available & up to date in OCI. The only question to me is: Should it be published & distributed? In view of a cheap future, I believe it worthwhile.